

M-10

1. An Essay on Elocution by Maxon. —
2. The Spirit's Work. by Hausher. —
3. Rules for Hearing and Reading the word of God. —
by Burges
- 4 The Messiah revealed to a Jew. —
- 5 Memoirs of Lady Huntingdon. —
- 6 The Life of Captain Scott. —
- 7 The Wrath by Young. —

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Griffith Davies Owen's Book

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AN
ESSAY
ON
ELOCUTION,
OR
PRONUNCIATION,
INTENDED CHIEFLY
FOR THE ASSISTANCE OF THOSE WHO
ARE OFTEN CALLED TO
READ AND SPEAK
IN
PUBLIC.

~~~~~  
By JOHN MASON, A.M.  
~~~~~

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ELUCUTION

PROVINCATION

READ AND BEAL

An ESSAY, &c.

ELOCUTION is a branch of oratory, the power and importance of which is greater than is generally thought; insomuch that eloquence takes its name from it*.

It was much cultivated by *Quintilian*, and before him by *Cicero*, and before him by *M. Antonius*; but before his time, it was too much neglected by the *Roman* orators: Which made him say, *He had seen many men famous for Eloquence, but not one of them that understood Elocution.* Quintil. lib. viii.

But what stress was laid upon it by the *Greek* orators, appears from that celebrated saying of *Demosthenes*; who being asked, what was the first principal thing in Oratory? answered, *Pronunciation*; being asked again what was the second? replied, *Pronunciation*; And what was the third? *Pronunciation*. Denoting that in his judgment the whole art, spirit, and power of oratory consisted in this†.

Cicero, and after him *Quintilian*, divided Oratory into five parts. 1. *Invention*: By which we provide ourselves with suitable and sufficient materials for a discourse.

* *Eloquentia ab eloqui.* I use the word *Elocution* here in its common and vulgar sense, to signify Utterance, Delivery, or Pronunciation, in which sense we frequently use it in the *English Language*, and which its *Latin Etymology* very well justifies; though I know some good writers apply it to a different idea, in conformity to the sense in which the *Latin* orators used the word *Elocutio*.

† Quintil. lib. xi. cap. 3. Tully, in relating this story concerning *Demosthenes*, says that the repeated answer was *Actio*. (De Oratore, l. 3.) Which shews that the *Latins* by *Pronunciatio* and *Actio* meant the same thing; and that by each they understood the right and just management of the voice, looks, and gesture in speaking. And hence they whose business is to speak publicly on the stage, are with us called *Actors*.

2. *Disposition* : By which they meant the division of their subject into parts and sentences, according to the most natural order ; and consequently the proper distribution and arrangement of their ideas. 3. *Elocution* : By which they always meant, what we call, *Diſtion* ; which conſiſts in ſuiting our words to our ideas, and the ſtile to the ſubject. 4. *Memory*, or a faculty of clearly diſcerning and retaining our ideas, and of calling to mind the moſt proper words by which to expreſs them. 5. *Pronunciation* ; or the art of managing the voice and geſture in ſpeaking *.

So that by *Pronunciation*, the antients underſtood both *Elocution* and *Action* ; and comprehended in it the right management of the voice, looks, and geſture. To the former of theſe the preſent eſſay is chiefly confined ; viz. the right management of the voice in reading or ſpeaking ; which is indifferently called by us, *Elocution* and *Pronunciation*.

The great deſign and end of a good Pronunciation is, to make the ideas ſeem to come from the heart ; and then they will not fail to excite the attention and affections of them that hear us : From which the great benefit and uſefulneſs of this too much neglected art may be ſeen.

The deſign of this eſſay is to ſhew

I. What a bad Pronunciation is, and how to avoid it.

II. What a good Pronunciation is, and how to attain it.

SECTION I.

What a bad Pronunciation is, and how to avoid it.

I. *WHAT* a bad Pronunciation is.

Now the ſeveral faults of Pronunciation are theſe following.

1. When the voice is too loud.

This is very diſagreeable to the hearer, and very inconvenient to the ſpeaker.

It will be very diſagreeable to the hearers, if they be perſons of good taſte ; who will always look upon it to be the effect either of *Ignorance* or *Affectation*.

• *Cic. Rhetoric. lib. 1.*

Some

Some will impute it to your *Ignorance*, and suppose that you was never instructed better since you left the reading-school; where children generally get a habit of reading in a high-pitched key, or an uniform elevated voice, without any regard to emphasis, cadence, or a graceful Elocution.

Others will impute it to *Affectation*; or a design to work upon their passions; which will immediately defeat the design, even if you had it. For if you would effectually move the passions, you must carefully conceal your intention so to do: For as soon as the mind perceives you have such a design upon it, it will be upon its guard. However, none but the most low, weak, and mechanical minds will be affected with mere dint of sound and noise. And the passions so raised, leave no lasting or valuable effects upon the mind, and answer no good purpose or end; because the understanding hath nothing to do with such impressions, and the memory no handle by which to retain or recal them. Not to say, it often answers a bad end; affects the mind in a wrong place, and gives it a false bias. However this may be thought to become the stage or the bar, it least of all befits the pulpit; where all ought to be solemn, serious, rational, and grave as the subjects there treated of.

It is false Oratory then to seek to persuade or affect by mere vehemence of voice. A thing that hath been often attempted by men of mean furniture, low genius, or bad taste, among the antients as well as the moderns. A practice which formerly gave the judicious *Quintilian* great offence: Who calls it not only clamoring, but *furious bellowing*; not vehemence, but downright violence, lib. 11, cap. 12.

Besides, an overstrained voice is very inconvenient to the *speaker*, as well as disgustful to judicious *hearers*. It exhausts his spirits to no purpose, and takes from him the proper management and modulation of his voice according to the sense of his subject. And, what is worst of all, it naturally leads him into a tone.

Every man's voice indeed should fill the place where he speaks; but if it exceed its natural key, it will be neither sweet, nor soft, nor agreeable, because he will not be able to give every word its proper and distinguishing sound.

2. Another fault in Pronunciation is when the voice is too low.

This is not so inconvenient to the speaker, but is as disagreeable to the hearer, as the other extreme. And indeed to the generality of hearers a voice too low is much more displeasing than one too loud; especially to those who are troubled with an impediment in hearing, and those who are best pleased with a lively and pathetick address, as most are. It is always offensive to an audience to observe any thing in the reader or speaker that looks like indolence or inattention. The hearer will never be affected whilst he sees the speaker indifferent.

The art of governing the voice consists a good deal in dexterously avoiding these two extremes: At least, this ought to be first minded. And for a general rule to direct you herein, I know of none better than this, *viz. carefully to preserve the key (that is, the command) of your voice; and, at the same time, to adapt the elevation and strength of it to the condition and number of the persons you speak to, and the nature of the place you speak in.* It would be altogether as ridiculous in a general who is haranguing an army to speak in a low and languid voice, as in a person who reads a chapter in a family to speak in a loud and eager one.

3. Another fault in Pronunciation is a thick, hasty, clattering voice.

When a person mumbles, or (as we say) clips or swallows his words, that is, leaves out some syllables in the long words, and never pronounces some of the short ones at all; but hurries on without any care to be heard distinctly, or to give his words their full sound, or his hearers the full sense of them.

This is often owing to a defect in the organs of speech, or a too great flutter of the animal spirits; but oftener to a bad habit uncorrected.

Demosthenes, the greatest orator *Greece* ever produced, had, it is said, nevertheless, three natural impediments in Pronunciation; all which he conquered by invincible labour and perseverance. One was a weakness of voice; which he cured by frequently declaiming on the sea-shore, amidst the noise of the waves. Another was a shortness of breath; which he mended by repeating his orations as he walked

walked up a hill. And the other was the fault I am speaking of; a thick mumbling way of speaking; which he broke himself of by declaiming with pebbles in his mouth.

4. Another fault in Pronunciation is when persons speak too quick :

Than which there is scarce any fault more common; especially among young persons, who imagine they can read very well, and are not afraid of being stopped in their career by the unexpected intervention of any hard word. And scarce any bad habit of the voice is conquered with more difficulty; though one would imagine nothing is more easy.

This manner of reading may do well enough when we are examining leases, perusing indentures, or reciting acts of parliament, where there is always a great superfluity of words; or in reading a news-paper, where there is but little matter that deserves our attention; but it is very improper in reading books of devotion and instruction, and especially the Sacred Scriptures, where the solemnity of the subject or the weight of the sense demands a particular regard. But it is most of all inexcuseable to read forms of prayer in this manner as acts of devotion.

The great disadvantage which attends this manner of Pronunciation is, that the hearer loses the benefit of more than half the good things he hears, and would fain remember, but cannot. And a speaker should always have a regard to the memory as well as the understanding of his hearers.

5. It is also a fault to speak too slow.

Some are apt to read in a heavy, droning, sleepy way; and through mere carelessness make pauses at improper places. This is very disagreeable. But to hemm, hawk, sneeze, yawn, or cough, between the periods, is more so.

A too slow Elocution is most faulty in reading trifles that do not require attention. It then becomes tedious. A person that is addicted to this slow way of speaking should always take care to reward his hearer's patience with important sentiments, and compensate the want of words by a weight of thought; and give his discourse its proper quantity of solid sense, that (as we say) what it wants in length it may make out in breadth.

But a too slow Elocution is a fault very rarely to be found,

found, unless in aged people, and those who naturally speak so in common conversation. And in these, if the Pronunciation be in all other respects just, decent, and proper, and especially if the subject be weighty or intricate, it is very excusable.

6. An irregular or uneven voice, is a great fault in reading :

That is, when the voice rises and falls by fits and starts, or when it is elevated or depressed unnaturally or unseasonably, without regard to sense or stops ; or always beginning a sentence with a high voice, and concluding it with a low one, or *vice versa* ; or always beginning and concluding it with the same key. Opposite to this is

7. A flat, dull, uniform tone of voice, without emphasis or cadence, or any regard to the sense or subject of what is read.

This is a habit, which children, who have been used to read their lessons by way of task, are very apt to fall into, and retain as they grow up. Such a monotony as attorney's clerks read in, when they examine an engrossed deed. This is a great infelicity when it becomes habitual ; because it deprives the hearer of the greatest part of the benefit or advantage he might receive by a close attention to the most weighty and interesting parts of the subject, which should always be distinguished or pointed out by the pronunciation. For a just pronunciation is a good commentary : And therefore no person ought to read a chapter or a psalm in public, before he hath carefully read it over to himself once or twice in private. But

Lastly, The greatest and most common fault of all is reading with a tone.

No habit is more easy to be contracted than this, or more hard to be conquered. This unnatural tone in reading and speaking is very various ; but whatever it be, it is always disgusting to persons of delicacy and judgment.

Some have a womanish squeaking tone ; which, persons whose voices are shrill and weak, and overstrained, are very apt to fall into.

Some have a singing or canting tone, which the speakers among the Quakers generally much affect, and by which their hearers are often much affected.

Others affect a high, swelling, theatrical tone ; who being

ing ambitious of the fame of fine orators, lay too much emphasis on every sentence, and thereby transgress the rules of true Oratory.

Others affect an awful and striking tone, attended with solemn grimace, as if they would move you with every word, whether the weight of the subject bear them out or not. This is what persons of a gloomy or melancholy cast of mind are most apt to give into.

Some have a set, uniform tone of voice ; which I have already spoken of. And others, an odd, whimsical, whining tone, peculiar to themselves, and not to be described ; only that it is laying the emphasis on words which do not require or deserve it.

It must be owned, there are some kinds of tone, which, though unnatural, yet, as managed by the speakers, are not very disagreeable ; and the mind must be much on its guard that can remain unmoved thereby.

When I have been affected with hearing some preachers deliver common or obscure sentiments in such a striking tone, I have endeavoured carefully to examine into the true reason of that emotion, or what it was that excited that affection in my mind ; and have found that it could not arise from the mere tone of the speaker, (which of itself was unnatural and disagreeable,) nor from the weight of the subject, (which was no more than common,) but from the earnestness, life and solemnity with which he spake, and his appearing himself to be much affected with what he delivered ; which two things will never fail to move an audience. And why they may not be as well observed and practised without a tone as with one, I cannot conceive. And without these I verily believe a tone itself would have no power to move ; and that it hath no other subserviency to raise the the passions than as it solemnizes the subject, and seems to shew the speaker's heart engaged. Pity that those two ends should not be answered by better means ! and that a bad habit in the speaker, indulging a false taste in the hearers, should secure one great end of Oratory by that which is the greatest abuse of it.

These are the most common faults of a bad Pronunciation. Our next enquiry is

II. *How*

II. *How to avoid them.*

To this end the few following rules may be of service.

1. If you would not read in too loud or too low a voice, consider whether your voice be naturally too low or too loud; and correct it accordingly in your ordinary conversation: by which means you will be better able to correct it in reading. If it be too low, converse with those that are deaf; if too loud, with those whose voices are low. Begin your periods with an even moderate voice, that you may have the command of it, to raise or fall it as the subject requires.

2. To cure a thick, confused, cluttering voice, accustom yourself, both in conversation and reading, to pronounce every word distinct and clear. Observe with what deliberation some converse and read, and how full a sound they give to every word; and imitate them. Do not affect to contract your words, (as some do) or run two into one. This may do very well in conversation, or in reading familiar dialogues, but is not so decent in grave and solemn subjects; especially in reading the Sacred Scriptures.

It appears from *Demosthenes's* case, that this fault of Pronunciation cannot be cured without much difficulty, nor will you find his remedy effectual without pains and perseverance.

3. To break a habit of reading too fast, attend diligently to the sense, weight, and propriety of every sentence you read, and of every emphatical word in it. This will not only be an advantage to yourself, but a double one to your hearers; for it will at once give them time to do the same, and excite their attention when they see yours is fixed. A solemn pause after a weighty thought is very beautiful and striking.—A well-timed stop gives as much grace to speech as it does to musick.—Imagine that you are reading to persons of slow and unready conceptions; and measure not your hearer's apprehension by your own. If you do, you may possibly out-run it. And as in reading you are not at liberty to repeat your words and sentences, *that* should engage you to be very deliberate in pronouncing them, that their sense may not be lost. The ease and advantage that will arise both to the reader and hearer, by
a free,

a free, full, and deliberate Pronunciation, is hardly to be imagined.

I need lay down no rules to avoid a too slow Pronunciation ; that being a fault which few are guilty of.

4. To cure an uneven, desultory voice, take care that you do not begin your periods either in too high or too low a key ; for that will necessarily lead you to an unnatural and improper variation of it. Have a careful regard to the nature and quantity of your points, and the length of your periods ; and keep your mind intent on the sense, subject, and spirit of your author.

The same directions are necessary to avoid a *monotony* in Pronunciation, or a dull, set, uniform tone of voice. For if your mind be but attentive to the sense of your subject, you will naturally manage and modulate your voice according to the nature and importance of it.

Lastly, To avoid all kinds of unnatural and disagreeable tones, the only rule is to endeavour to speak with the same ease and freedom as you would do on the same subject in private conversation. You hear nobody converse in a tone, unless they have the brogue of some other country, or have got into a habit (as some have) of altering the natural key of their voice, when they are talking of some serious subject in religion. But I can see no reason in the world, that when in common conversation we speak in a natural voice with proper accent and emphasis, yet as soon as we begin to read, or talk of religion, or speak in publick, we should immediately assume a stiff, awkward, unnatural tone. If we are indeed deeply affected with the subject we read or talk of, the voice will naturally vary according to the passion excited ; but if we vary it unnaturally, only to seem affected, or with a design to affect others, it then becomes a tone, and is offensive.

In reading, then, attend to your subject, and deliver it just in such a manner as you would do if you were talking of it. This is the great, general and most important rule of all ; which, if carefully observed, will correct not only this but almost all the other faults of a bad Pronunciation ; and give you an easy, decent, graceful delivery, agreeable to all the rules of a right Elocution. For however apt we are to transgress them in reading, we follow them naturally and easily enough in conversation. And children will tell
a story

story with all the natural graces and beauties of Pronunciation, however awkwardly they may read the same out of a book *.

And therefore to attain a just and proper Pronunciation in reading, it will be adviseable to begin with those books that are written in a familiar stile, that comes nearest to that of common conversation; such as the *Pilgrim's Progress*, the *Family Instructor*, or some innocent novel.

SECTION II.

What a good Pronunciation is, and how to attain it.

I. *WHAT a good Pronunciation is.*

A good Pronunciation in reading, is the art of managing and governing the voice so as to express the full sense and spirit of your author in that just, decent, and graceful manner, which will not only instruct but affect the hearers; and will not only raise in them the same ideas he intended to convey, but the same passions he really felt. This is the great end of reading to others, and this end can only be attained by a proper and just Pronunciation.

And hence we may learn wherein a good Pronunciation in speaking consists; which is nothing but a natural, easy, and graceful variation of voice, suitable to the nature and importance of the sentiments we deliver.

A good Pronunciation in both these respects is more easily attained by some than others; as some can more readily enter into the sense and sentiments of an author, and more easily deliver their own, than others can; and at the same time have a more happy facility of expressing all the proper variations and modulations of the voice than others have. Thus persons of a quick apprehension, and a brisk flow of animal spirits (setting aside all impediments of the organs) have generally a more lively, just, and natural

* *Let the tone and sound of your voice in reading be the same as it is in speaking; and do not affect to change that natural and easy sound wherewith you speak, for a strange, new, awkward tone, as some do when they begin to read; which would almost persuade our ears, that the speaker and the reader were two different persons, if our eyes did not tell us the contrary.*

WATT'S Art of Reading,
Elocution

Elocution, than persons of a slow perception and flegmatic cast. However, it may in a good degree be attained by every one that will carefully attend to and practise those rules, that are proper to acquire it. Which leads me therefore

II. To enquire how a good Pronunciation is to be attained.

And to this end the observation of the following rules is necessary.

1. Have a particular regard to your *Pauses, Emphases, and Cadence.*

1. To your *Pauses.*

And with respect to this, you will in a good measure in reading be directed by the points: but not perfectly; for there are but few books that are exactly pointed.

The common stops or points are these: A *Comma* (,), *Semi-colon* (;), *Colon* (:), *Period* (.), *Interrogation* (?), and *Admiration* (!).

But beside these, there are four more notes or distinctions of pause, viz. a *Parenthesis* (()); which requires the pause of a *Comma* at least, and sometimes a *Semi-colon* after it. 2. A *double-period* or *blank-line* (—); which denote the pause of two periods, or half a paragraph. 3. A *paragraph* or *break*; when the line is broke or left imperfect, and the next begins under the second or third letter of the preceding line; and denotes the pause of two double periods. 4. A *double paragraph*, that is, when the next line not only begins shorter than the preceding, but leaves the space of a whole line vacant between them; which shews that the voice is to rest during the time of two paragraphs.

These points serve two purposes. 1. To distinguish the sense of the author. 2. To direct the Pronunciation of the reader.

You are not to fetch your breath (if it can be avoided) till you come to the period or full stop; but a discernable pause is to be made at every one, according to its proper quantity or duration.

A comma stops the voice while we may privately tell *one*, a Semi-colon *two*; a Colon *three*: and a period *four*.

Where the periods are very long, you may take breath at a Colon or Semi-colon; and sometimes at a Comma,

B

but

But never where there is no stop at all. And that you may not be under a necessity to take fresh breath before you come to a proper pause, it will be proper to look forward to the close of the sentence, and measure the length of it with your eye before you begin it; that if it be long, you may take in a sufficient supply of breath to carry you to the end of it.

To break a habit of taking breath too often in reading, accustom yourself to read long periods, such (for instance) as the sixteen first lines in *Milton's Paradise Lost*.

*“ Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing heavenly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
That Shepherd, who first taught the chosen Seed,
In the beginning how the heavens and earth
Rose out of Chaos: or if Sion-hill
Delight thee more, and Silva's brook that flow'd
Fast by the Oracle of God; I thence
Invoke thy aid to my advent'rous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose, or rhyme.”*

And after some weighty and important sentiment, it will be proper to make a longer pause than ordinary; and especially towards the close or application of a discourse or sermon (where the the subject usually grows more serious and affecting) these long pauses are very proper; as they at once compose and affect the mind, and give it time to think. It will also be very helpful to the speaker's voice; and give his Pronunciation the advantage of variety, which is always pleasing to the hearers. And therefore in printing the most affecting parts of a discourse, there should be (as we sometimes see there is) a frequent use of the long pauses, viz. the periods, blank lines, and paragraphs.

But after all, there is so much license admitted, and so much irregularity introduced, into the modern method of Punctuation, that it is become a very imperfect rule to direct

rest, a just Pronunciation. The pauses therefore, as well as the variations of the voice, must be chiefly regulated by a careful attention to the sense and importance of the subject.

2. The next thing to be regarded in reading is the *Emphasis*; and to see that it be always laid on the emphatical word.

When we distinguish any particular syllable in a word with a strong voice, it is called *Accent*; when we thus distinguish any particular word in a sentence, it is called *Emphasis*; and the word so distinguished, the *emphatical word*. And the emphatical words (for there are often more than one) in a sentence are those which carry a weight or importance in themselves, or those on which the sense of the rest depends; and these must always be distinguished by a fuller and stronger sound of voice, where-ever they are found, whether in the beginning, middle, or end of a sentence. Take for instance those words of the satyrist.

Rém, facias Rém,
Récte, si possis, si non, quocunque Modo Rém.

HOR.

In these lines the emphatical words are accented; and which they are, the sense will always discover.

Here it may not be amiss briefly to observe two or three things.

1. That some sentences are so full and comprehensive, that almost every word is emphatical: For instance, that pathetic expostulation in the prophecy of *Ezekiel*:

Why will ye die!

In this short sentence every word is emphatical, and on which ever word you lay the emphasis, whether the first, second, third, or fourth, it strikes out a different sense, and opens a new subject of moving expostulation*.

2. Some sentences are equivocal, as well as some words; that is, contain in them more senses than one; and which is the sense intended, can only be known by observing on what word the emphasis is laid. For instance,—*Shall*

* See this particularly illustrated in Reynold's compassionate Address.

you ride to town to-day? This question is capable of being taken in four different senses, according to the different words on which you lay the emphasis. If it be laid on the word [you], the answer may be, *No, but I intend to send my Servant in my stead.* If the emphasis be laid on the word [ride], the proper answer might be, *No, I intend to walk it.* If you place the emphasis on the word [town], it is a different question; and the answer may be, *No, for I design to ride into the country.* And if the emphasis be laid upon the words [to-day], the sense is still something different from all these; and the proper answer may be, *No, but I shall to-morrow.* Of such importance oftentimes is a right emphasis, in order to determine the proper sense of what we read or speak. But I would observe

3. The voice must express, as near as may be, the very sense or idea designed to be conveyed by the emphatical word; by a strong, rough, and violent, or a soft, smooth, and tender sound.

Thus the different passions of the mind are to be expressed by a different sound or tone of voice; *Love*, by a soft, smooth, languishing voice; *Anger*, by a strong, vehement, elevated voice; *Joy*, by a quick, sweet, clear voice; *Sorrow*, by a low, flexible, interrupted voice; *Fear*, by a dejected, tremulous, hesitating voice; *Courage*, hath a full, bold, and loud voice; and *Perplexity*, a grave, steady, and earnest one. Briefly, in *Exordiums* the voice should be low; in *Narrations*, distinct; in *Reasoning*, slow; in *persuasions*, strong; it should thunder in *anger*, soften in *sorrow*, tremble in *fear*, and melt in *love* *.

4. The variation of the emphasis must not only distinguish the various passions described, but the several forms and figures of speech in which they are expressed, *e. g.*

In a *prosopopæia*, we must change the voice as the person introduced would.

In an *antithesis*, one contrary must be pronounced louder than the other.

In a *climax*, the voice should always rise with it.

In *dialogues*, it should alter with the parts.

In *repetitions*, it should be loudest in the second place.

* *Apta Pronunciatio certè ea est quæ iis de quibus dicimus accommodatur.* Quint. lib. i. cap. 3.

Words

Words of quality and distinction, or of praise or dispraise, must be pronounced with a strong emphasis.

Hence then it follows

Lastly, That no emphasis at all is better than a wrong, or a misplaced one. For *that* only perplexes, *this* always misleads the mind of the hearer.

3. The next thing to be observed is *cadence*.

This is directly opposite to *emphasis*. *Emphasis* is raising the voice, *cadence* is falling it; and when rightly managed is very musical.

But beside a cadence of voice, there is such a thing as cadence of stile: and that is, when the sense being almost expressed and perfectly discerned by the reader, the remaining words (which are only necessary to compleat the period) gently fall of themselves without any emphatical word among them. And if your author's language be pure and elegant, his cadence of stile will naturally direct your cadence of voice.

Cadence generally takes place at the end of a sentence; unless it closes with an emphatical word.

Every *parenthesis* is to be pronounced in cadence; that is, with a low voice, and quicker than ordinary; that it may not take off the attention too much from the sense of the period it interrupts. But all *apostrophes* and *proso-popæias* are to be pronounced in *emphasis*.

So much for *pauses*, *emphasis*, and *cadence*: A careful regard to all which is the first rule for attaining a right Pronunciation.

II. If you would acquire a just pronunciation in reading you must not only take in the full sense, but enter into the spirit of your author: For you can never convey the force and fulness of his ideas to another till you feel them yourself. No man can read an author he does not perfectly understand and taste.

" The great rule which the masters of rhetoric so much
 " press, can never enough be remembered; *that to make*
 " *a man speak well and pronounce with a proper emphasis,*
 " *he ought thoroughly to understand all that he says, be*
 " *fully persuaded of it, and bring himself to have those*
 " *affections, which he desires to infuse into others.* He that
 " is inwardly persuaded of the truth of what he says, and

“ that hath a concern about it in his mind, will pronounce with a natural vehemence, that is far more lovely than all the strains that art can lead him to. An orator must endeavour to feel what he says, and then he will speak so as to make others feel it *.”

This is a very general and important rule, and (as the bishop says) can never enough be remembered ; and hence it is that so few are able to read *Milton* or *Young*.

The same rules are to be observed in reading poetry and prose: Neither the rhyme nor the numbers should take off your attention from the sense and spirit of your author. It is this only that must direct your Pronunciation in poetry as well as prose. When you read verse, you must not at all favour the measure or rhyme; that often obscures the sense and spoils the Pronunciation: For the great end of Pronunciation is to elucidate and heighten the sense; that is, to represent it not only in a clear but a strong light. Whatever then obstructs this is carefully to be avoided, both in verse and prose. Nay, this ought to be more carefully observed in reading verse than prose; because the author, by a constant attention to his measures and rhyme, and the exaltation of his language, is often very apt to obscure his sense; which therefore requires the more care in the reader to discover and distinguish it by the Pronunciation. And if when you read verse with proper pause, emphasis, and cadence, and a Pronunciation varied and governed by the sense, it be not harmonious and beautiful, the fault is not in the reader but the author. And if the verse be good, to read it thus will improve its harmony; because it will take off that uniformity of sound and accent which tires the ear, and makes the numbers heavy and disagreeable.

III. Another important rule to be observed in Elocution is, *study nature*. By this I mean,

1. Your own natural dispositions and affections. And those subjects that are most suitable to them, you will easily pronounce with a beautiful propriety: And to heighten the Pronunciation, the natural warmth of the mind should be permitted to have its course under a proper rein and regulation.

2. Study the natural dispositions and affections of

* *Burnet's Pastoral Care*, p. 228.

others.

others. For some are much more easily impressed and moved one way, and some another. And an orator should be acquainted with all the avenues to the heart.

3. Study the most easy and natural way of expressing yourself, both as to the tone of voice and the mode of speech. And this is best learnt by observations on common conversation; where all is free, natural and easy; where we are only intent on making ourselves understood, and conveying our ideas in a strong, plain, and lively manner, by the most natural language, Pronunciation, and action. And the nearer our Pronunciation in public comes to the freedom and ease of that we use in common discourse (provided we keep up the dignity of the subject, and preserve a propriety of expression), the more just and natural and agreeable it will generally be.

Above all things, then, *study Nature*; avoid affectation; never use art, if you have not the art to conceal it: For whatever does not appear natural, can never be agreeable, much less persuasive.

IV. Endeavour to keep your mind collected and composed. Guard against that flutter and timidity of spirit, which is the common infelicity of young, and especially bashful persons, when they first begin to speak or read in public. This is a great hindrance both to their Pronunciation and invention; and at once gives both themselves and their hearers an unnecessary pain. It will by constant opposition wear off. And the best way to give the mind a proper degree of assurance and self-command at such a time, is

1. To be entire master of your subject; and a consciousness that you deliver to your audience nothing but what is well worth their hearing, will give you a good degree of courage.

2. Endeavour to be wholly engaged in your subject; and when the mind is intent upon and warmed with it, it will forget that awful deference it before paid to the audience, which was so apt to disconcert it.

3. If the sight of your hearers, or any of them discompose you, keep your eyes from them.

V. Be sure to keep up a life, spirit, and energy in the expression; and let the voice naturally vary according to the variation of the stile and subject.

Whatever be the subject, it will never be pleasing, if
the

the stile be low and flat; nor will the beauty of the stile be discovered, if the Pronunciation be so.

Cicero observes there must be a glow in our stile if we would warm our hearers. And who does not observe how ridiculous it is to pronounce the *ardens verbum* in a cold, lifeless tone? and the transition of the voice (as before observed) must always correspond with that of the subject, and the passions it was intended to excite.

VI. In order to attain a just and graceful Pronunciation, you should accustom yourselves frequently to hear those who excel in it, whether at the bar or in the pulpit; where you will see all the fore-mentioned rules exemplified, and be able to account for all those graces and beauties of Pronunciation which always pleased you, but you did not know why.

And indeed, the art of Pronunciation, like all others, is better learned by imitation than rule: But to be first acquainted with the rules of it, will make the imitation more easy. And beyond all that hath been said, or can be described, you will observe a certain agreeableness of manner in some preachers that is natural to them, not to be reduced to any rule, and to be learned by imitation only; nor by that, unless it be some degree natural to you.

Lastly, you should frequently exercise yourself to read aloud according to the foregoing rules.

It is practice only that must give you the faculty of an elegant Pronunciation. This, like other habits, is only to be attained by often repeated acts.

Orators, indeed, as well as poets, must be born so, or they will never excel in their respective arts: But that part of oratory which consists in a decent and graceful Pronunciation (provided there be no defect in the organs of speech) may be attained by rule, imitation, and practice; and, when attained, will give a beauty to your speech, a force to your thoughts, and a pleasure to the hearers, not to be expressed; and which all admire, but none can imitate, unless they are first prepared for it by art and nature*.

In fine, the great advantage of a just Pronunciation is,

* *ut sibi quivis*

Speret idem, sudet multum, frustra que laboret

Ausus idem.

Hor. de Art. Poet. l. 241.

that

that it will please all, whether they have no taste, a bad taste, or a good taste.

HERE I intended to have put an end to this Essay : But as under the word [Pronunciation] the Antients comprehended *Action* as well as *Elocution* ; and as a few general rules concerning that may be of use to such as speak in public, I thought it might not be improper here briefly to subjoin them.

The *Action*, then, should be as easy and as natural as the *Elocution* ; and, like that, must be varied and directed by the passions.

An affected violence of motion is as disgusting as an affected vehemence of voice ; and no *Action*, as bad as no *Emphasis* : Which two faults commonly go together, as do the other two, just before mentioned.

Those parts of the body that are to be principally employed in Oratorical *Action* are the *head*, the *face*, the *eyes*, the *hands*, and the upper part of the *whole body*.

1. The *head*. This should generally be in an erect posture ; turning sometimes on one side, and sometimes on the other, that the voice may be heard by the whole audience, and a regard paid to the several parts of it.

It should always be on the same side with the *Action* of the hands and body, except when we express an abhorrence, or a refusal of any thing, which is done by rejecting it with the right hand, and turning away the head to the left ; as in that sentence—*Dii talem terris avertite pestem*—where such an *Action* is very proper in pronouncing the word *avertite*.

2. The *countenance*. In this is the seat of the soul and the very life of *Action*. Every passion, whilst uttered with the tongue, should be painted in the face. There is often more eloquence in a look than any words can express. By this we are awed, charmed, incensed, softened, grieved, rejoiced, raised or dejected, according as we catch the fire of the speaker's passion from his face. In short, there is no end in recounting the force and effects of this dumb oratory ; which nature only teaches, and which persons of low passions lose all the advantages of. Look well upon a good piece of painting where the passions are strongly expressed, and you will conceive the power of it.

The

The eyes. These should be carried from one part of the audience to another, with a modest and decent respect; which will tend to recal and fix their attention, and animate your own spirit by observing their attention fixed. But if their affections be strongly moved, and observing it be a means of raising your own too high, it will be necessary then to keep the eye from off them. For though an orator should always be animated, he should never be overcome by his passions.

In all appeals to Heaven, and sometimes at the solemn mention of the name of the great God, the eyes and the head should be turned upwards.

In adoration, the hands and eyes should be lifted up, and the head and body bowing down.

In solemn vows, exclamations and appeals to Heaven, the hands, head, and eyes should all be lifted up; but in humiliation and confession bowed down.

The language of the eye is inexpressible. It is the the window of the soul; from which sometimes the whole heart looks out at once, and speaks more feelingly than all the warmest strains of Oratory; and comes effectually in aid of it, when the passion is too strong to be uttered.

4. *The hands.*

The left hand should never be used alone; unless it be to attend the motion of the head and eyes in an address to the audience on the left side.

The right hand may be often used alone.

When you speak of the body, you may point to it with the middle finger of your right hand.

When you speak of your soul or conscience you may lay your right hand gently on your breast.

It should be often displayed with an easy motion to favour an emphasis; but seldom or never be quite extended.

All its motions should be from the left to the right.

Both the hands displayed, and the arms extended is a violent Action, and never just or decent unless the audience be noisy, and part of them at a distance from the speaker, and he is labouring to be heard; and then they should never be extended higher than the head, unless pointing at something above the audience.

The motion of the hand should always correspond with those of the head and eyes; as they should with the passions expressed.

In

In deliberate proof or argumentation, no Action is more proper or natural than gently to lay the first finger of the right hand on the palm of the left.

Of what great use the proper motion of the hand is in assisting Pronunciation, and how many passions may be strongly indicated thereby, when attended with that of the head and eyes, is not easy to be described, but is soon observed in common conversation.

Lastly, the posture of the body.

This should be usually erect; not continually changing, nor always motionless; declining in acts of humiliation; in acts of praise and thanksgiving, raised.

It should always accompany the motion of the hands, head, and eyes, when they are directed to any particular part of the audience; but never so far as to let the back be turned to any part of it.

But let it suffice just to hint at these things. They who desire to see them more largely treated of, may consult *Quintilian de Institutione Oratoria*, lib. xi. cap. 3.

But after all, with regard to Action, the great rule is (the same as in Pronunciation) to *follow nature and avoid affectation*. The Action of the body, and the several parts of it, must correspond with the Pronunciation, as that does with the stile, and the stile with the subject. A perfect harmony of all which compleats the orator*.

* *Those who desire to be more particularly acquainted with this subject, and the several other branches of Oratory, I would advise not to trust altogether to the rules of modern writers, but to repair to the fountain head; and converse with the great masters and teachers of this art among the Antients; particularly Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Cicero, Quintilian, and Longinus.*

FINIS.

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